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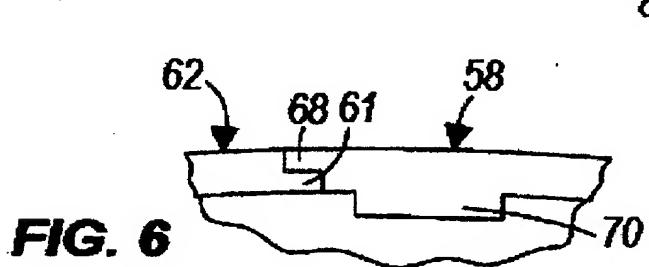
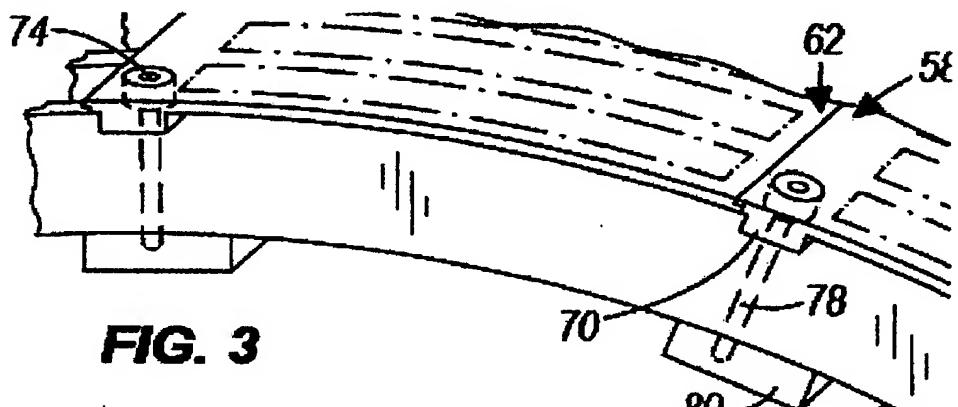
**REMARKS**

Applicant acknowledges with thanks the allowance of Claims 8 through 10, and the allowability of Claims 2, 3, 6 and 7 if rewritten in independent form. Claim 2 has been so rewritten, and Claims 3, 6 and 7 depend from Claim 2, so the allowance of Claims 2, 3, 6 and 7 is respectfully requested.

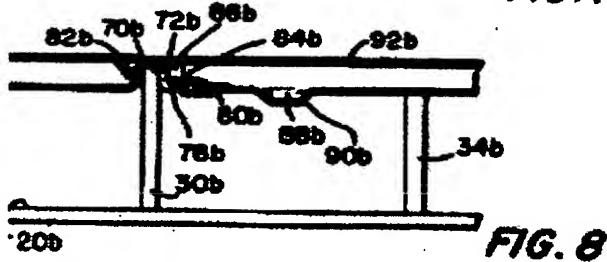
Claim 5 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's admission of prior art in view of Luthi (US 3,837,499). Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claim 5 defines, in part, a cylindrical rotating thickening device including a shell, a perforated deck surrounding and supported on the shell, the deck including a plurality of closely adjacent deck segments, each deck segment including a leading edge and a trailing edge, with one edge of one of the deck segments held against the shell by the next adjacent edge of a following one of the deck segments, and the leading edge has a lip, and the trailing edge is clamped between the leading edge lip and the shell.

None of the references, whether considered singularly or in combination, teach or suggest the clamping of a deck segment trailing edge between the leading edge of an adjacent deck segment and the shell. Only Applicant's disclosure teaches such a construction. (See portions of Figures 3 and 6 reproduced below)



Luthi (US 3,837,499), for example, only teaches the holding of a deck segment against a rib 34b. No clamping of a leading edge between a trailing edge and a shell is present. (See Figure 8 reproduced below)



Accordingly, the allowance and passage to issue of Claims 2, 3, and 5 through 10 is respectfully requested.

10 October 2006

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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